

VI. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Division of Parks and Recreation=s approach to natural resource management is directed by the North Carolina Constitution and the State Parks Act, both of which require the prudent management of natural resources. The constitution sets the overall policy by broadly defining the conservation and protection of natural resources and the acquisition of such resources as a proper function of government. The State Parks Act states that unique archaeological, geological, biological, scenic and recreational resources are a part of the heritage of the people that *A...should be preserved and managed by those people for their use and for the use of their visitors and descendants.*@

The North Carolina state parks system plays an important role in maintaining, rehabilitating and perpetuating the state=s natural heritage. The natural resources of the state parks system are: high quality, rare or representative examples of natural communities; native plants and animals; geological features and landforms; water resources; and the natural processes that affect these resources. The primary objective in natural resource management will be the protection of natural resources for their inherent integrity and for appropriate types of enjoyment while ensuring their availability for future generations.

It is the Division=s policy that natural resources will be managed by allowing natural environments to evolve through natural processes with minimal human influence. Natural resource management will not attempt solely to preserve individual species or processes; rather, it will attempt to maintain all the components and processes of a park=s naturally evolving ecosystems. When intervention is necessary, direct or secondary effects on park resources will be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Intervention of natural processes may occur:

1. To correct or compensate for the previous human disruption of natural processes;
2. To protect, restore or enhance rare species and natural communities;
3. To protect, restore or enhance significant archaeological resources;
4. To construct, maintain, improve or protect park facilities; and,
5. To prevent danger to human health or safety around park facilities.

All park facilities will be designed, constructed and maintained to avoid adverse impacts to high quality natural communities, rare plant and animal species, major archaeological sites and other significant natural and cultural resources.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Division of Parks and Recreation staff identifies natural and cultural resource management issues as a component of the general management plan process and groups them according to the categories shown below. Staff assigns a high, medium or low priority to each issue using the criteria described at the end of this section. The Division's Natural Resources Program is responsible for all actions unless otherwise noted.

Category	Subcategory	Project	Priority*
Water Resource Management	Water Pollution	Drain from Marina parking lot goes directly into the basin. A stormwater management plan should be devised to minimize runoff directly to the basin.	High
Water Resource Management	River bank erosion	Snows cut continues to erode into the park. The Snows Cut trail has already been moved away from the river bank. The erosion along Snows Cut should be monitored by the Division.	Medium
Botanical Resource Management	Inventory Deficiencies	Natural community mapping of the park is needed.	Medium
Botanical Resource Management	Exotic Species Management	Exotic species in need of control include phragmites, privet, and Chinaberry.	High
Animal Resource Management	Inventory Deficiencies	Large-scale herp survey is needed for the park. Mist-netting for the presences of Yellow-Bats, <i>Lasiusurus intermedius</i> , should be attempted. In addition, ponds should be sampled for both flora and fauna.	Medium
Animal Management	Rare Species Management	A plan needs to be developed to reduce the amount of fatalities for Coral snakes at road crossings.	High
Animal Management	Reintroduction	Gopher frog introduction is currently being investigated.	Medium
Animal Management	Exotic Species Management	Feral cat removal should be continued.	High
Cultural Resource Management	Cultural Resource Management	The Sugarloaf area needs better interpretation and protection from human impacts.	Low
Land Use Management	Fire Management	Current acres under prescription need to be burned regularly.	High
Land Use Management	Riparian Buffer Zone Protection	Ensure that 75 acres is added to next lease for MOTSU.	High
Visitor and Recreational Resource Management	Soil Compaction	Campground sites need to be properly delineated to avoid further resource impacts from expanding sites.	Medium
Infrastructure Management	Trails Management	Fly Trap trail needs to be upgraded to handicapped accessible.	Medium
Infrastructure	Environmental	Environmental review will be needed	Low

Management	Compliance for Planned Construction Projects	for maintenance dredging and picnic/parking expansion.	
Resource Management Training	Training	Prescribed fire training is needed.	Medium

*Explanation of priority codes:

- HIGH If the resource management activity is not undertaken in the near future, there is a distinct possibility that natural resources will be compromised. These issues should be addressed within the next five years.
- MEDIUM Although there is a possibility that resources could be compromised, the priority is not as critical as the high priority projects.
- LOW Projects with low priority have significantly less chance for compromise of the natural resources if the project is not undertaken in a timely fashion or the project may depend on completion of other projects.

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